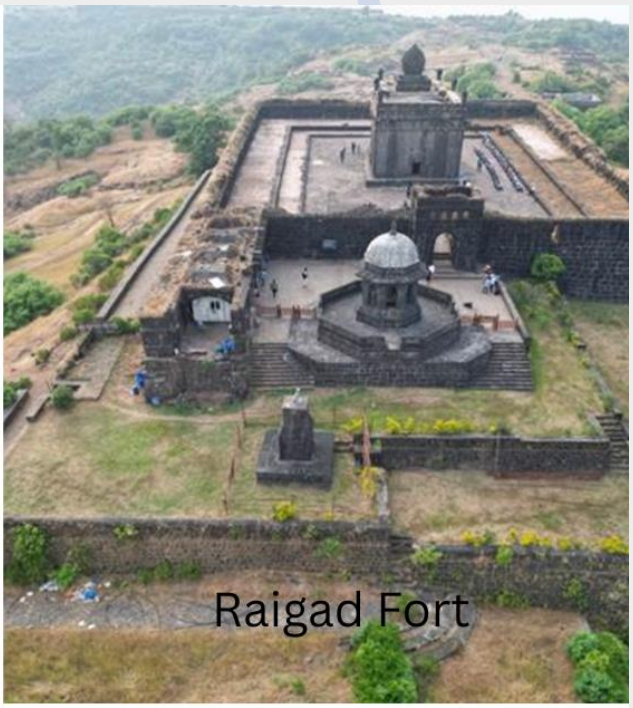
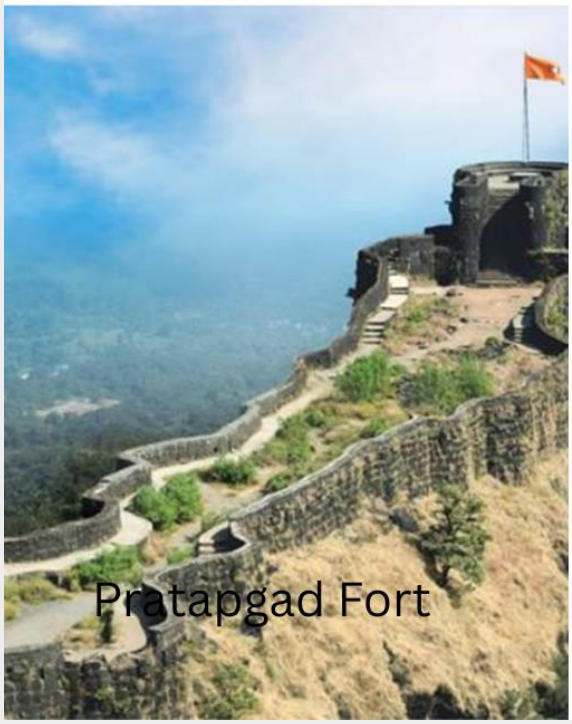
1. Maratha Military Landscapes Added to UNESCO World Heritage List

India's 44th World Heritage Site Recognized at 47th UNESCO Session

India's official nomination for the 2024–25 cycle, Maratha Military Landscapes of India, has been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List during the 47th session of the World Heritage Committee held in Paris. This marks India's 44th World Heritage property. The ASI is the nodal agency for all World Heritage-related matters in India.





About the Maratha Military Landscapes

Showcasing Maratha Strategic and Architectural Brilliance

These sites, built between the 17th and 19th centuries CE, include a network of 12 forts demonstrating the Maratha Empire's military foresight and architectural skill.

List of the Forts:
• In Maharashtra: Salher, Shivneri, Lohgad, Khanderi, Raigad, Rajgad, Pratapgad, Suvarnadurg, Panhala, Vijaydurg, Sindhudurg
• In Tamil Nadu: Gingee Fort

Site Classification and Geographic Diversity
The forts represent a range of landscapes and defense strategies:
• Hill Forts: Salher, Shivneri, Lohgad, Raigad, Rajgad, Gingee
• Hill-Forest Fort: Pratapgad
• Hill-Plateau Fort: Panhala
• Coastal Fort: Vijaydurg
• Island Forts: Khanderi, Suvarnadurg, Sindhudurg

Recent Milestones
• In 2024, the Moidams of Charaideo in Assam were inscribed during the 46th session held in New Delhi.
• This latest recognition highlights India's continued efforts to promote and preserve its rich cultural legacy on the world stage.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper I; Culture
Source: PIB

2. What Is the EU's Carbon Border Tax (CBAM)?

Introduction
The Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) is an import tax imposed by the European Union (EU) on goods produced in countries with less strict carbon emission rules than the EU.

Its stated goal is to prevent "carbon leakage"—where companies move production to countries with weaker environmental regulations—and to encourage cleaner industrial practices globally.

Why Has BRICS Rejected CBAM?
Seen as Unfair by Developing Nations
At the recent BRICS summit in Rio de Janeiro, member countries including India, China, and Brazil condemned and rejected CBAM. They called it a unilateral, protectionist measure that violates international trade and climate agreements and hurts developing economies trying to transition to greener practices.

How Does CBAM Work?
• Implemented by the EU in 2023, full rollout in 2026.
• Taxes imports (e.g., steel, cement, aluminium) based on how much carbon was emitted during their production.

• EU importers must buy carbon certificates equal to what they would have paid if the product were made in Europe under EU carbon pricing rules.
• If a foreign producer has already paid for carbon emissions in their home country, the EU allows a deduction.

Why Is CBAM a Problem for Developing Countries?

1. Hurts Competitiveness

Goods like steel or cement from India become costlier and less competitive in the EU market.

2. Violates Global Agreements

• Goes against the Paris Agreement, which protects developing nations from harsh economic impacts.
• Undermines the principle of "differentiated responsibilities", which gives developing countries flexibility in their climate actions.

3. Benefits Developed Countries

Industries in wealthier countries with EU-level carbon standards are not taxed, giving them a market advantage.

How Have Countries Like India Responded?

Diplomatic Opposition

• India, China, and others raised the issue at UN climate summits (e.g., COP27 in Egypt, COP28 in Dubai, and upcoming COP29 in Baku).
• At COP29, they delayed the opening session demanding a discussion on trade-related climate policies.

Joint Declarations

• The BASIC group (Brazil, South Africa, India, China) issued multiple joint statements opposing CBAM and calling for solidarity among developing nations.

What Other Trade Measures Are Tied to Climate Action?

• More CBAM-like rules are expected from the UK and Canada.
• Non-tariff climate measures:
o EU bans goods linked to illegally harvested forests.
o The U.S. Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) gives clean-tech subsidies that impact global trade.
• Climate-linked policies are also driving new forms of protectionism, often targeting Chinese dominance in green technology supply chains.

Why This Matters

CBAM is not just a climate measure—it's a powerful trade tool.

It reflects how climate change is reshaping global economics, often at the cost of developing nations. The resistance from BRICS and others shows growing concern over fairness, equity, and shared responsibility in the global fight against climate change.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; International Relations
Source: Indian Express

3. PM Modi Receives Brazil's Highest Civilian Honour

Awarded the Grand Collar of the National Order of the Southern Cross

On July 9, 2025, Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva conferred the "Grand Collar of the National Order of the Southern Cross" on Prime Minister Narendra Modi—the highest national honour of Brazil.

A Tribute to India-Brazil Friendship

PM Modi expressed deep gratitude to the President, Government, and people of Brazil. He said the award was a tribute to India's 1.4 billion people and symbolised the strong friendship between the two nations.

PM Modi said the award would further inspire the people of both countries to deepen their warm and friendly relationship.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; International Relations
Source: PIB

4. Indian Astronaut Shukla Grows Crops in Space

Fenugreek (Methi) and Green Gram (Moong) Sprouted on ISS

In the final days of his space mission, Indian astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla turned space farmer by growing fenugreek and green gram seeds aboard the International Space Station (ISS). The experiment aims to study how microgravity affects seed germination and early plant growth.

ISRO's Collaboration with Indian Scientists

Shukla praised ISRO's efforts in partnering with Indian institutions for space research. The plant experiment is led by:

- Ravikumar Hosamani (University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad)
- Sudheer Siddapureddy (IIT Dharwad)

Once the seeds return to Earth, they will be cultivated over generations to examine changes in genetics, microbes, and nutrition.

Microalgae for Future Space Missions

In another experiment, Shukla worked with microalgae, which could help produce food, oxygen, and biofuel in space. Their resilience makes them promising for long-term space missions.

Studying Crop Seeds and Genetics

Shukla also took images of six types of crop seeds, which will be grown after his return. The goal is to find plants with the best traits for genetic research and sustainable farming in space.

Excited About Stem Cell Research

Shukla shared his excitement about another project: stem cell research. Scientists are testing if supplements can boost stem cell abilities to heal or repair injuries faster in space conditions.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Science & Technology
Source: Indian Express